

## “AN ACT SUPPLEMENTING MEMBERSHIP OF THE E 9-1-1 COMMISSION”

My name is George Pohorilak I am a resident of Southington and I am here today to testify in support of HB 5266 an “Act Supplementing the Membership of the E 9-1-1 Commission”.

Currently the Enhanced 9-1-1 Commission is comprised of eleven members representing state agencies, police services, fire services, wireless phone services and one manager of a public safety answering point (PSAP). I believe that the membership of the Enhanced 9-1-1 Commission should be increased by two new member categories; a 9-1-1 telecommunicator (dispatcher/call taker) and a member of the public for the following reasons.

First, the E9-1-1 Commission is responsible for advising the Office of Statewide Emergency Telecommunications in the planning, design, implementation and coordination of state wide emergency 9-1-1 service. Connecticut has one of the most advanced Enhanced 9-1-1 systems in the nation and leads the nation in implementing next generation 9-1-1 services. The public safety telecommunicators who staff the State’s 107 public safety answering points (PSAPs) receive and process over 2.2 million 9-1-1 calls every year. Public safety telecommunicators are trained and certified professionals who are in fact, the fourth public safety service, along with police, fire and EMS.

It is my firm belief that the dedicated professionals who answer and process Connecticut’s 9-1-1 calls each year should have a representative on the Enhanced 9-1-1 Commission. Their insight into the day to day receipt and processing of 9-1-1 calls would be a valuable addition to the debate and discussion of 9-1-1 issues that come before the Enhanced 9-1-1 Commission. The task of public safety telecommunicators has always been a demanding one and will become more challenging with the implementation of next generation 9-1-1 technology and the proliferation of new consumer smart phone services. With next generation 9-1-1 the public safety telecommunicator’s role in the emergency response equation will be increased. Their voice at the Commission should be heard not at the public comment part of the meeting but as a member of the Commission. Recognition of the critical role they play in every emergency response, by creating a membership category for dispatcher/call takers is the correct thing to do. The public safety telecommunicator/call taker/dispatcher representative should be selected from nominations from the Connecticut Chapter of the National Emergency Number Association (NENA).

Additionally, the Commission’s debate and discussion would be enhanced with the addition of a member of the public as a Commission member. While the 2 plus million 9-1-1 calls are received and processed by dedicated public safety telecommunicators they are made by the public. With the advance of a wide variety of new smart phone technologies, that are changing almost daily, consumer input into 9-1-1 policy development is needed.

The addition of two members to the E 9-1-1 Commission would not add any additional cost to the state. I retired from state service in 2009, at that time I was the director of the State’s Office of Statewide Emergency Telecommunications. Over a 30 year career in government, most of it working on 9-1-1, I can say that reaching out to the 9-1-1 PSAP community and the public was critical to the success of Connecticut’s 9-1-1 program. Adding a public safety telecommunicator and a member of the public to the Commission will enhance that approach. Thank you.

George J. Pohorilak  
1297 East Street  
Southington, CT 06489  
[gpohorilak@gmail.com](mailto:gpohorilak@gmail.com)